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AUTHOR Dauterive, Barbara Lynn
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ABSTRACT

The objective of this dissertation proposal was to propose a study to determine the relationship between administrative skill and goal accomplishment. The paper begins with a review of the literature and a discussion of the Halpin model to promote the development of a theory of administration. Next, the proposed study is explained. According to the paper, the Ledbetter rating scale will be administered to all principals in the Orleans Parish Public School System and a questionnaire on organizational climate will be administered to participating teachers. In addition, data pertaining to student achievement scores and suspension records will be collected from the schools. Specifically, the proposed study will investigate the use of human, technical, and conceptual skills by administrators in their job performance, measure the effectiveness of the school via its goals, and determine the relationship between the administrator's use of skills and the effectiveness of the school. (Author/LD)

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A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIVE BEHAVIOR OF PRINCIPALS AND GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENT OF SCHOOLS

Presentation of

A Dissertation Proposal

By

Barbara Lynn Dauterive

University of New Orleans

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southwest Educational Research Association, 1980.

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INTRODUCTION

"The school has a sense of mission, unity, identity, and wholeness that pervades every aspect of its functioning" (Goodlad, 1979). While the specific purposes may differ from community to community, there is nontheless a common core of purposes which is shared by most American schools (Halpin, 1966).

Central to the accomplishment of the goals of the school is the principal. He, more than any other person, shapes and articulates the prevailing ambiance and creates a sense of mission. In studies of successful schools, the significance of the principal came to the surface (Goodlad, 1979).

The principal is the crucial implementor of change. Any proposal for change that intends to alter the quality of life in the school and that intends to direct the school toward the accomplishment of its goals depends primarily on the principal (Mitchell, 1972). The leader behavior of the principal has been identified as one factor that distinguishes successful schools from typical failures (Weber, 1971).

The behavior of leaders can be defined in terms of the skills they exhibit in carrying out their jobs effectively. Three such skills are: technical skills, human

skills, and conceptual skills (Katz, 1974). The appropriate mix of these skills varies as an individual advances in the organization. According to Katz, less technical skills tend to be needed as one advances from lower to higher levels in the organization, but more and more conceptual skill is necessary. The common denominator that appears to be crucial at all levels is human skill.

The behavior of the leader, or the skills that he exhibits, are considered to be effective to the degree that the organization's goals are accomplished (Halpin, 1967). The ultimate criteria upon which effective leader behavior is judged must be the same criteria that have been used to define the organization's task. Schools exist to accomplish purposes (Goodlad, 1979).

A Paradigm to Facilitate Research On Administrator Behavior

Although the measurement of effectiveness is extremely difficult, it is essential in leadership theory and research (Miskel, 1974). According to Andrew Halpin, the ensuing difficulties of defining the criterion variable are easily solvable through definition of the purpose of the organization. The measurement of effectiveness of an or-

ganization, and of its leader, is exorably bound to the organization's purpose for existence (Halpin, 1966). Organizations exist to accomplish purposes. Everything else - motivation, group behavior, organizational development, leadership - are studied in order to implement organizational purposes (Hampton, Summer, and Webber, 1978). The public school organization is constituted for a purpose and this purpose can be stated in terms of desired outcomes (Halpin, 1966).

The primary purpose of leadership research is to identify the relationships that exist between the behavior of the administrator and the desired outcomes of the organization. No matter how successful one may be in defining morale among workers, organizational climate or job satisfaction, until he pins down this particular relationship he will have missed the most fundamental research issue (Halpin, 1957).

Andrew W. Halpin (1957) devised a paradigm to promote the development of a theory of administration. It offers an approach to the study of administrator behavior in education (See Figure 1). The paradigm provides the basis for a systematic classification and critique of existent and ongoing research on administrator behavior.

The Total Paradigm. An examination of the paradigm as a whole reveals the following fundamental points:

(1) The primary purpose is to identify the relationships that exist between the behavior of the admin-

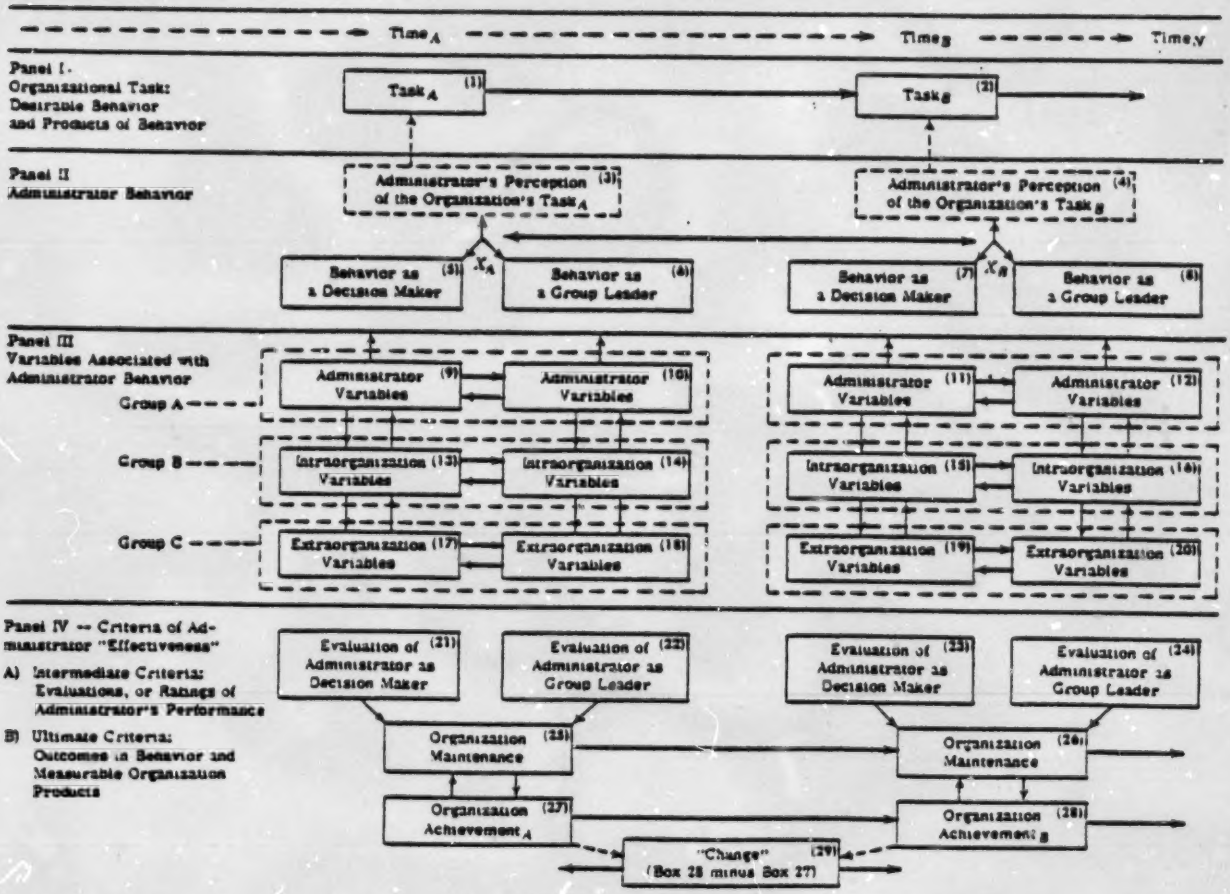

FIGURE 1.

PARADIGM FOR RESEARCH ON ADMINISTRATOR BEHAVIOR

istrator (Panel II) and changes in the Organization's Achievement (Panel IVB). No matter how successful one is in defining the relationships in other parts of the paradigm, until he pins down this particular relationship he will have missed the fundamental research issue. The crux of the problem is to predict events in Panel IVB on the basis of variables in Panel II; all other relationships are adjuvant.

(2) Research efforts to date may be characterized as follows:

(A) They have tended to focus on Panel III variables and have restricted their analysis to the relationship among variables within this Panel.

(B) They have studied the relationship between Administrator Variables and Intermediate Criteria of Administrator Effectiveness without following through from Panel IVA to Panel IVB to demonstrate the relationships between evaluations of the administrator and objective criteria of the organization's accomplishments.

(C) They have designed studies in which administrator behavior variables (Panel II) are predicted from the variables in Panel III. Studies of this kind provide useful information, but this information is of limited value unless one proceeds to the next step of determining the relationship between the behavior predicted in Panel II and the criteria in Panel IV. Panel III Variables are studied to increase the accuracy of the prediction. Research confined to the relationship in Panels II and III fails to tackle the criterion issue.

Implications

Public schools are constituted for a purpose and this purpose can be stated in terms of desired outcomes (Halpin, 1957). To the degree that one is successful in defining the purpose of the school in behavioral terms, he will be equally successful in establishing dependable criteria of administrator effectiveness. The main highway to research progress runs between these criteria and the behavior of the administrator. This is a sharpshooting rather than a shoot-gun approach; it requires targets to be named before shooting starts.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study will investigate the use of human skill, technical skill and conceptual skill by school administrators. A skill is defined as an ability which can be developed and which is manifest in behavior.

This study will investigate the aforementioned skills in relation to the defined goals of the school system. Through a comprehensive survey of administrators, parents, community members, students and teachers, the goals of the system under study were identified as follows: (1) to improve proficiency in basic reading and mathematics skills, (2) to improve student conduct, and (3) to improve school environment (New Orleans Public Schools, 1978).

The purpose of this study is: (1) to investigate the use of human, technical, and conceptual skills by administrators in their job performance; (2) to measure the effectiveness of the school per the aforementioned goals; and (3) to determine the relationship between the administrator's use of human, technical, and conceptual skills and the effectiveness of the school. The ultimate objective of this study is to determine the relationship, if any, between administrative skill and goal accomplishment.

The questions pertinent to this study are:

(1) Of human, technical, and conceptual skills, which are used most often by school administrators?

(2) How effective is the school in accomplishing its goals?

(3) What is the relationship between administrator skill and goal accomplishment?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Theoretically, the leader behavior of the administrator has been identified as one factor that distinguishes successful schools from typical failures. Weber's 1971 study of four instructionally effective inner-city schools was

explicitly alternative to Jensen (1969) and others who had satisfied themselves that low achievement by poor children derived principally from inherent disabilities. Weber found that successful schools had strong leadership in that their principal was instrumental in setting the tone of the school. The schools had "high expectations" for their students.

In 1974, the New York State Office of Education Performance Review published a study that confirmed some of Weber's findings. The findings indicated that differences in student performances can be attributed to factors under the school's control. These findings reinforce the relevance of leadership as an essential institutional element affecting pupil performance.

The 1976 Madden, Lawson and Sweet study of school effectiveness in California is a more rigorous and sophisticated version of the Weber and New York Studies. Compared to the low-achieving schools in the study, the high-achieving schools were characterized by greater principal support and greater teacher effort.

The view of today's principalship, and it is a growing one, is that the principal is the critical person in the educational process (Tye, 1977). After all the legislation is passed, after all the negotiations are completed, after all the policy is implemented the principal is left to perform his or her leadership roles where it really counts, at the school.

According to Goodlad (1979), the principal is cen-

tral to the attainment of an effective school. She or he, more than any other person, shapes and articulates the prevailing ambiance and creates a sense of mission. In recent studies of schools effecting integration with some success, invariably the principal was identified as strategic. The significance of the principal - his or her values, dedication and strength - came to the surface.

The traits, behaviors and/or skills that distinguish successful principals and effective schools from unsuccessful principals and uneffective schools have been studied extensively (Cartwright and Zander, 1960 ; Hemphill et al., 1962; Lipham, 1964; Madden et al., 1976; Edmonds, 1979; Getzels et al., 1968; House and Mitchell, 1971; Miskel, 1974; Weber, 1971). Because the principal plays such a critical role in shaping the atmosphere of the school and in articulating its mission, it is predicted that studies on the leader behavior of principals will continue at an ever-increasing pace. This proposed research is one such study.

DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

The proposed correlational study will be conducted to investigate the relationship between human, technical and conceptual skills of the principal and the goal accomplishment of the school.

Population and Sample

The population will consist of all principals in the Orleans Parish Public School System.

The sample will consist of all principals who have administered the same school for both the 1978-79 and the current school year in the Orleans Parish Public School System. Principals will be requested to voluntarily participate in this study.

Measuring Instruments

A thirty (30) item rating scale was devised by Ledbetter (1978) which divides the functions of the school administrator into technical, human and conceptual skills.

The Ledbetter rating scale will be administered to all school principals in the sample who agree to participate. Following the consent of the principal, teachers of the respective faculties will be requested to participate.

Teachers who agree to participate will complete the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire. It is a sixty-four (64) item questionnaire with a Likert-type response scale that was developed by Halpin and Croft (1963).

Data Collection and Analysis

The following data gathering techniques and instruments will be employed:

(1) Principals participating in the study will complete the Ledbetter rating scale.

(2) In the participating schools, teachers will complete the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire.

(3) Data will be obtained from the participating schools on:

a) Standardized student achievement scores in reading and mathematics for the 1978-79 school year. These will be reported in the form of gain scores in order to control for socio-economic variables.

b) Suspension records for the 1978-79 school year.

Relationships between the human, technical, and conceptual skill scores and the following variables will be investigated:

(1) The climate of the school as measured by the OCDQ.

(2) The achievement of the students.

(3) The record of student suspensions.

Using canonical correlation, the relative quantities of human, technical, and conceptual skills needed to generate maximum school effectiveness will be determined.

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